

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Pratt Street, London, NW1 0DP

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's strong, skilled and determined leadership has been the key factor in the school's improvement. She has built a strong team of senior leaders, teachers and support staff who are all pulling in the same direction.
- The governing body has a significant impact on school improvement. Governors support the headteacher in taking difficult decisions as long as they are in the interest of the pupils.
- The headteacher has created an environment in which high expectations are the norm and where teachers are continually striving to do their jobs even better.
- As teaching has improved, so has the pupils' progress. In several classes pupils make very rapid progress, particularly in their reading and writing.
- The pupils' exemplary behaviour and highly positive attitudes make the school calm and purposeful. Pupils try to do their best at all times, which contributes greatly to their good and improving learning.
- Staff and governors do their utmost to make the school a safe place for everyone. Pupils say how secure they feel and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their rising attendance and much improved punctuality to school.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to doing their utmost to help all pupils to succeed by identifying individual needs so that action can be taken to support their learning. As a result, no group of pupils is being left behind as attainment rises.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Progress in mathematics is slower than in English. Marking is less helpful in mathematics and pupils have few opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects.
- Not all teaching is consistently of the highest quality that the headteacher is striving for, because at times, lessons do not drive forward the learning of all pupils sufficiently rapidly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, of which nine were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Grace Marriott

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the majority of primary schools, although pupil numbers have risen over the last three years.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well above average. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is high. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- More pupils than in other primary schools join or leave part-way through their primary school education.
- The school has been in a federation with St Eugene de Mazenod Catholic Primary School since December 2009. The federation is led by an executive headteacher. The school has its own governing body and additionally there is an overarching federation committee.
- The school shares its buildings with St Michael's CE Primary School.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress made by pupils in mathematics by:
 - raising the profile of mathematics through displays and models of high-quality work
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their marking so they can improve more quickly and meet their targets
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across subjects.
- Raise securely good teaching to be consistently outstanding by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned and taught to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of ability
 - increasing the pace of lessons and moving the learning of all pupils forward more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils are making good and improving progress. Most pupils reach national expectations by the end of Year 6 and increasing numbers exceed expectations. This shows the rapid improvements made in recent years. Progress is more rapid in reading and writing and attainment is higher than in mathematics.
- Pupils are successful in their writing because it is highly structured for them during Key Stage 1. Here, pupils are given methods which help them to feel confident that they are becoming successful writers. Writing becomes more creative, interesting and extensive as the pupils move through Key Stage 2. Their creativity is developed by responding to stimulating literature in lessons and during 'Writing Week' when all classes studied and wrote about a different Roald Dahl book. Teachers provide models of high-quality writing for pupils to emulate in each lesson.
- Basic reading skills develop well across Reception and Year 1. Results were above average in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) reflecting the effective teaching in these classes. Pupils of all ages are exposed to a wide range of literature, take great pleasure from books and confidently discuss what they like about the books they read, their favourite styles and authors.
- Mathematics has not been given quite the same high profile across the school as reading and writing and features less in displays and the celebration of pupils' work. In response to a fall in Year 6 test results in 2012, the school has revisited how calculation should develop to bring consistency of approach across classes. Pupils readily apply these skills when solving problems in mathematics lessons but have few opportunities to hone their skills in other subjects.
- The good teaching in Reception is enabling the children to settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of their learning from skill levels when they start that are much lower than expected for their age. However, their attainment is well below average by the time they enter Year 1.
- No group of pupils is being left behind as attainment rises. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those speaking English as an additional language progress quickly once fluency in English is secure. As with those who arrive later than at the usual times, the longer they spend in school the better they do, although some arriving later in Key Stage 2 do not always have time to catch up with others. The skilled support received in lessons as well as in individual reading programmes enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils supported through pupil premium funding also make good progress and their attainment in terms of average point scores is similar to others in each class.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved considerably in recent years. There is little that requires improvement and much that moves learning forward rapidly.
- All teachers have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour. This means learning flows uninterrupted in calm and well-managed classrooms. The most effective teachers use innovative methods and interesting resources to capture and retain the pupils' attention. In these lessons teachers and support staff continually assess the pupils' progress during lessons and adapt work accordingly. Typical of the most effective teaching was a Year 4 lesson where the recently hatched chicks were used as a resource for a wide variety of measurements and investigations by the pupils. This lesson demonstrated well the potential for pupils' better learning in mathematics if they applied their skills more in practical situations.
- The new support staff team is particularly effective in supporting and extending learning. They are skilled and sufficiently confident to take the initiative with individuals and groups of pupils adapting materials as appropriate. They work with pupils of all abilities and run clubs such as for gifted and talented mathematicians.

- Pupils are very clear about how well they are doing and the targets they are aiming for in the long term. Marking is particularly effective in writing but less so in mathematics as pupils are not given enough time to respond to their teacher's comments and so improve their work.
- Where teaching is less effective, methods adopted and tasks given to pupils are not always sharply matched to their needs and abilities. Furthermore, the pace of learning can drop when explanations by teachers last too long.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary because pupils want to live up to their teachers' high expectations and routines are consistently implemented. They respond instantly when teachers seek their attention and settle very quickly to tasks set. Their ability to sustain concentration and manage their own behaviour develops rapidly as they move through the school.
- Pupils are very polite and well mannered. They move sensibly around the school and play happily together on the playground. Teachers are meticulous in recording any incidents where behaviour falls below their expectations so that pupils concerned can be helped to change their ways.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are secure in the knowledge that there is an adult to confide in with any problems they may have. They are taught how to look after themselves and stay safe. One example of note is when following training on internet safety, Year 6 pupils then enacted to the whole school problematic scenarios that others might face and how they could be dealt with.
- Pupils are very firm in saying that bullying simply does not happen as they and the staff do not tolerate anyone being unkind to others. The strong relationships between pupils are shown by the way they support each other and help newcomers to settle quickly into school and make new friends. They go out of their way to make sure that no-one is left out or remains unhappy at any time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff, pupils and herself. It is through her demanding yet supportive leadership that the school has made such major strides forward in recent years. Other leaders make a significant contribution and share the responsibility for driving the school forward. This has enabled improvements to become deeply embedded in order to realise the headteacher's ambitions for the school. Very rigorous systems are in place to check the school's performance and take action quickly where needed. The focus is sharply on raising teaching from good to outstanding through checking carefully on each teacher's performance, setting them demanding targets and providing support from school staff or through teachers from the partner school.
- The school's engagement with the local authority has supported its continued improvement. Regular reviews of the school's performance and the quality of teaching have helped to confirm the headteacher's judgements and clarify priorities for further action. Tackling these has then been supported very effectively by training from consultants such as for phonics teaching.
- The progress of all pupils is checked carefully to enable teachers to take swift action if they spot an individual who is in danger of missing their targets. The main thrust has been on individual tuition for pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding. Careful checking of the impact of these additional programmes has been particularly effective in maximising the impact of this funding.
- There is an excellent response from pupils to experiences provided to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through art, literature and meditation sessions. For example, Year 6 pupils made thoughtful observations when recreating parts of Picasso's painting Guernica and were able to talk about some of the symbolism the work contains. The school's values are strongly evident and pupils understand and respect them. Subjects and the way they

are planned and taught seek to widen horizons and raise expectations through trips and themed weeks each half-term.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very knowledgeable and use their expertise to ask searching questions of the headteacher. Regular training, frequent visits to see the school at work and detailed reports from staff mean they understand the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. They are acutely aware through their understanding of assessment data that mathematics is the area that requires attention. They accurately judge teaching to be good and understand how the headteacher is seeking to improve the performance of individuals and only rewards teachers if pupils make at least good progress in their classes. Governors make sure that all staff are as much committed to tackling discrimination and in ensuring equality of opportunity as they are. The large budget deficit inherited three years ago has been eliminated, while recruiting highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants. Governors also carefully track the progress of pupils receiving additional support through pupil premium funding so they are aware of the impact.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100048
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	400029

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Harvey
Headteacher	Juliette Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 December 2010
Telephone number	020 7485 7997
Fax number	020 7428 9426
Email address	admin@ourladys.camden.sch.uk

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